This woman could have saved JFK if only she had married his killer

By Alan Philps in Acre, Israel

IN HER youth, Ella Prokhorchyk played an unwitting role in one of the great events of the 20th century: she could have prevented the assassination of President Kennedy.

Mrs Prokhorchyk, 62, from Minsk, Belarus, was for 10 months the girlfriend of Lee Harvey Oswald, the American ex-Marine who briefly lived in Minsk to experience communism. He returned home and shot the president in 1963.

Mystery has surrounded the Kennedy killing ever since, spawning countless conspiracy theories. Oswald himself took his secret to the grave, as he was shot dead as he was about to testify.

But one thing is clear: if the young Ella had accepted Oswald's offer of marriage, he probably would not have gone back to America, and Kennedy could still be alive.

In his diary Oswald described Ella as "a very attractive Russian Jew". They were working at a radio factory in Minsk, where Oswald had been sent after he asked to stay in the Soviet Union at the end of a tourist trip.

The KGB kept a close eye on him to see if he was an idealist or a CIA agent. He soon proposed to her, making it clear that he would stay in the Soviet bloc if she agreed to share her life with him.

Lover: Ella Prokhorchyk

But Ella was worried about what would happen to her family if she married the American. She was too level-headed and too concerned about her family to jump into such a dangerous liaison.

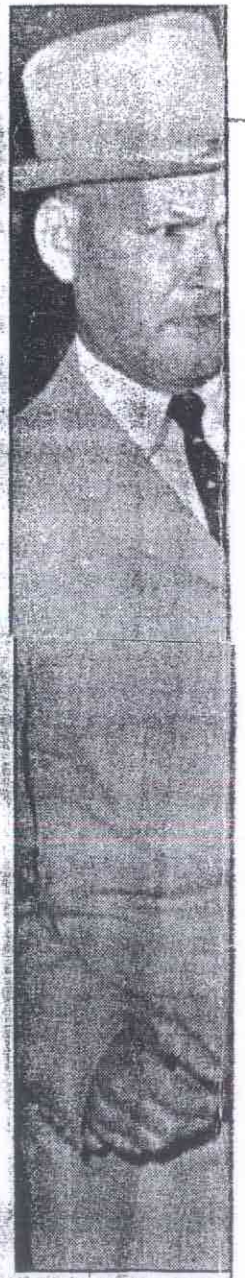
In the end, the romance was totally one-sided. "I might look an emotional person, but when it comes to love, my head rules my heart," she said. She opted for a more secure course. She left the radio factory to study mathematics and then worked as a school teacher. She married Maxim, another radio factory worker, and has no regrets about having rejected Oswald.

"I played for time," she said. "But eventually I could not hold out any longer and said no." Their relationship ended in February 1961 in a blazing row. Ella had stated flatly that she would not marry a foreigner, and he had to become a Soviet citizen first.

The next month he met another girl, they married in April and took off together for the States," said Mrs Prokhorchyk, who now lives in Acre, Israel.

"If I'd accepted his proposal, he would probably have stayed in the Soviet bloc because he would have taken out Soviet citizenship. As it was, two years later Kennedy was dead."

She has no regrets over rejecting Oswald and has always found it hard to believe that he pulled the trigger. "Powerful forces", such as the Mafia, were behind the assassination, she believes.



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